

Nation

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On Saturday, December 15, 2012

At Sheraton Hotel (150 Albert Street), Ottawa, ON.

Another successful year, to which many women have tremendously embarked and continued to work effortlessly towards the general well-being of Eeyou Istchee. CWEIA will once again host a celebration towards all women's gifts and efforts, and more importantly, to promote, to empower and to recognize women in various diverse workplaces.

Your participation by nominating women from various diverse workplaces is fundamental and greatly appreciated towards making this prestigious event a memorable one for all age groups of females and nominees. CWEIA believes in honoring, recognizing and celebrating all women's efforts of contribution and dedication towards achieving their goals. All women bring much wealth of knowledge and wisdom, and deserve to be recognized as role models in Eeyou Istchee. With absolute faith and confidence, please nominate women in the following categories:

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Please access the nomination forms at your local CWEIA/Women's Group office or print out a copy from www.cweia.ca.

The submission DEADLINE is on November 23, 2012. Please submit your nominations to Charlotte Ottereyes, Regional Economic Coordinator.

*For further inquiries of this event,
please feel free to contact the following:*

www.cweia.ca

Linda Shecapio
CWEIA
Interim - Regional Coordinator
Satellite Office:
Toll Free: 1(855) 830-7918
Office: 1(819) 770-8888
Cell: 1(819) 664-9246
E-Mail: coordinator@cweia.ca

Charlotte Ottereyes
CWEIA
Regional Economic Development
Coordinator
Office: 1(819) 752-2602
Fax: 1(819) 753-2842
E-Mail: economic@cweia.ca or
c_ottereyes@hotmail.com

Sponsored in part by the Nation

Heading towards 20

by Will Nicholls



Looking back I feel like I should pull out a goose quill and inkpot. When we started the Nation our methods of putting together the magazine was already obsolete. The older printers would bring in the younger guys and tell them this is how we used to do it. We couldn't afford all the bells and whistles of the latest technology at the time. Shoestring budgets are something any Cree was used to in those days and we were no different.

Times have changed and the Nation is going to be 20 in another year. So the Editorial Board and staff decided leading up to our 20th anniversary we would take a look back in every issue from our humble beginnings and share some of those moments. An update on the stories would be included.

Some of the faces may have changed over the years but our goals and philosophies have not. We continue to bring the Cree of James Bay the news, sports, arts

and entertainment and features, culture and legends as best as we can.

When we looked at past issues we realized there wouldn't be space for all the stories we would like to showcase. Our choices depended on space (length of article) and whoever on the Editorial Board won the fight.

Coming up on 20 years of the Nation and looking at the back issues compared to now I see changes. Some for the better and some that were left by the wayside that should be still part of the Nation. I am reminded of when I turned 30 in a way. I didn't worry or let it bother me until a couple of days before my birthday. An older friend asked what was wrong. I told him and he laughed. He explained until your teens were over you were learning but under supervision for the most part by parents, teachers and other community members. In your 20s, you were either working or going to school but considered an adult. You were just exploring your new-found freedom then. It was after you turned 30 you had 10 years to accomplish something you were proud to have done.

I was 32 years old when Ernest Webb and I decided to take a chance and created the Nation. I feel that was an accomplishment that not only myself, but everyone can feel proud of. It would not have been possible without the support we received from Cree readers, businesses and leaders.

I look forward to this year and getting to our 20th anniversary. The Nation is one of the oldest independent Aboriginal magazines in Canada and I thank all of you for making it possible. Having our own media – whether it is print, radio or television – is an important component of nation building. That was why we chose the name the Nation. I thank the writers, staff, advertisers, readers and friends for all they have done and contributed in the past, present and in the future.



The Nation gang when they were very young

Contents

editorial

Heading towards 20 3

rez notes

Dealing with taxis 4

news

Waswanipi Mining windfall 5

Renew, refresh, rejoice 7

features

Going for
Aboriginal youth 10

Breaking down barriers 12

Nation flashback 16

A cautionary tale 18

A family affair 21

Lessons from Chisasibi 22

Accidental hotel 23

A positive spin 24

Alone for treatment 25

UTNS

Fighting diabetes 26

borderlines

Four more years 27



photo by:
Akiva Levitas

Dealing with taxis

by Sonny Orr



At 25,000 feet and cruising at a fair clip with a strong tailwind, the sun setting golden red, wisps of cloud try to clock out the emerging stars. It's just another commuter day for me. The smoked salmon on cold bagel made the white wine go down easier... Soon, the plane descends and my halfway point in my trek to another small town in Abitibi. We disembark in a sweltering plus one atmosphere, then quickly trek down the long route to our baggage. Soon, the taxi driver asks where to, and I tell him where we're going. He quickly retorts that it has to be a set fee of too much money and it's better we take the bus down the street.

I'd like to say that I don't care, I'll pay the fee, but something holds my tongue back. We get in the cab and give him the address, which is a four-star hotel nearby. He wants me to admit that it's better to use the free hotel shuttle bus. I tell him to hurry up and make the trip as quick as possible, that there's a nearby Walmart we have to go to. He quickly gets the hint and takes us to our destination. In the short time it takes to know where he comes from, how long he's been in the country, I decide that my two decade-long survey of Montreal taxi drivers are over. I have come to a verdict and a classification of taxi drivers in ways that might be quite valuable to know.

First of all, money talks and let that be the first language you speak when you communicate in cabbytalkie, the local slang for those who can translate this, you know what I mean. Then, ask the cabbie if he knows where the address is. If he turns and points somewhere, then you know you're in trouble and must act immediately. If you have a cellphone, call someone to complain that this driver doesn't know where to go and force him to get his map. If he pretends to confuse

you with a similar name from another part of town, and you agree, then you're in trouble again.

Quickly make another call and sound like you know a lawyer, just in case you have to go to a court session. Say a million dollars, agree, then hang up and look satisfied. Make no more calls then ask the cabbie when you expect to be at your destination. If it sounds okay, you're okay.

Then see if the cab driver knows where most of the express lanes are, and if he sticks to the bus and taxi lanes. If not, then he isn't exercising his right of using the fast lane. Bring this up and ask him to speed it up, time is money. He will probably agree, tell a joke and get a response. If it's jovial, then you've got a driver in a good mood and he won't want to bother with trying to make too much money off you. Ultimately, the closest drive makes the most money, but for those poor guys who wait long hours just to end up at an airport hotel a few minutes later, it just doesn't cut it for them.

I make it worthwhile for my new friend as we enter the driveway of the fancy hotel. The cabbie is relieved and satisfied with the tip I hand out and helps with the baggage. I jokingly tell him that's he's lucky that he isn't getting us on our way back home or he'd need a chiropractor to iron out the kinks from lifting several 50-pounders we call excess baggage.

Getting around in Montreal's taxi system is fairly easy now – everyone's hungry for the next dollar as I am hungry for the forbidden fruits of the fast-food industry. These days, every buck is worth a penny less while it sits there, and the driver is happy to respond to a call just around the corner, and on his turf to beat. Walmart awaits with an hour to spare and we are happy.

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EDITORIAL BOARD

L. Stewart, W. Nicholls,
N. Diamond, E. Webb

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Will Nicholls

IIYUU AYIMUUN EDITOR
Brian Webb

COPY EDITOR
Martin Siberok

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

N. Diamond, J. Mei, S. Orr, A. German,
D. Mocula, A. Levitas,
K. Larocque, L. Stewart, J. Staniforth,
D. David, X. Kataquapit,

PHOTOGRAPHY

A. German, N. Diamond,
W. Nicholls, D. Valade

DIRECTOR OF FINANCES
Linda Ludwick

SALES REPRESENTATIVES

Kevin Raye, Danielle Valade, Ginette Grégoire

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
K. Larocque

DESIGN AND LAYOUT
R. Lawson

THANKS TO: Air Creebec

WHERE TO REACH US:

POSTMASTER:

The Nation PRODUCTION OFFICE

4529 CLARK, #403, MONTREAL, QC., H2T 2T3

EDITORIAL & ADS

TEL.: 514-272-3077, FAX: 514-278-9914

The Nation HEAD OFFICE

P.O. BOX 151, CHISASIBI, QC. J0M 1E0

www.nationnews.ca

E-MAIL ADDRESSES:

Editorial: nation@beesum-communications.com
news@beesum-communications.com

Ads: for Danielle Valade

ads@beesum-communications.com

for Ginette Grégoire

publicity@beesum-communications.com

for Kevin Raye

sales@beesum-communications.com

Classifieds: news@beesum-communications.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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Mining windfall for Waswanipi

An exploration agreement brings Vancouver mining company to Eeyou Istchee in search of gold

by Jesse Staniforth

Waswanipi Chief Paul Gull was joined by Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff in Montreal on October 24 as he signed an exploration agreement with Vancouver-based mining company Eagle Hill Exploration.

In signing an agreement with Brad Kitchen, director of Eagle Hill Exploration, Gull ushered in greater gold-mining exploration to the Waswanipi area, working toward the eventual establishment of the Windfall Lake gold-mining project. The agreement was initially approved by the Waswanipi Band Council in June, and was then approved by the Grand Council of the Crees in August.

"The signature of this agreement presents another tangible step forward in the active participation of the Crees as partners in the economic and social development of Eeyou Istchee," said Iserhoff in his official remarks.

"The Crees have ensured the collaboration with Eagle Hill will take place with the Crees as active partners, not just passive bystanders. This advanced exploration agreement will provide meaningful participation for the Crees of Waswanipi, but more appropriately it sets the proper tone of cooperation and partnership as we remarked in discussions of the final agreement of the project, which we hope will provide benefits in the form of training, business opportunities and economic development."

The press release given out by the Grand Council emphasized that Eagle Hill will provide "preferential treatment" to Cree businesses supplying goods and services. Eagle Hill has also agreed to carry out a business and employment capacity study in Waswanipi and other Cree communities to determine how best to take on local workers, and will

open a business-development office in Waswanipi.

Iserhoff went on to underline that this agreement was concrete evidence of the Crees' investment in development on their traditional lands.

"The Crees are open for business," he said. "We have much to contribute and we ask nothing better than to partner with others for the benefit of all."

Following the Deputy Grand Chief, Waswanipi Chief Paul Gull – former Natural Resources director of his community – spoke about the development of mining over the years.

"We never had agreements in the past, until recently," said Gull, citing the Supreme Court decision regarding mining companies' duty to consult with First Peoples living in the areas they intend to develop. "Today, I believe mining companies have social and economic responsibilities, and I believe this will create opportunities for jobs for youth in the area. Everybody knows what's in the agreement, so it gives us an insight of what's to come."

Gull said 50 young people turn 18 every year in his community, meaning that over the next five years, more than 200 young people will be entering the labour market. At the moment, he said, 15 Waswanipi youth are in training in mining and extraction.

"By the time they're done, hopefully they can go work in any mine," he said. "They've said to me, 'I'm not going to be hunting most of my life, but I do want to have things set up so I can hunt. The only way to set that up is if I have a job.' That's how some of the youth think."

Speaking afterward, Gull said he sees mining exploration as an opportunity for Cree communities, whose relationship with mining is not the same as it was a half-century ago.



Paul Gull

"Right now, I feel confident that they won't leave like they used to," he said. "In the past, they didn't clean up the mess they left behind. They just left it the way it is. I've got about 50 sites in Waswanipi – past exploration sites, former mine sites. I have one place where there's a hole and someone can just fall in there. In the past, I've said, 'You built the communities of Chapais, Chibougamau, with houses for your workers. Gradually they paid for it. The same thing could happen in my community – we need houses. Maybe you could build houses for the miners, and they could pay it back gradually.'"

Gull said he has encountered some unwillingness from mining companies to deal with Cree authorities in Eeyou Istchee.

"Some of them suggested they didn't need an agreement with me," he said. "Well, I can stop them with an environmental process. But if we agree to work together, maybe you'll have an easier time. For me, it's trying to find a mutual relationship with these people, develop a friendship, and get into an agreement such as this one. They have a duty to consult the community it impacts. There's a Supreme Court decision on that – that's basically how I approach them. Without pushing them."

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Renew, refresh, rejoice

Lemon Cree health conference held without a hitch

by Amy German

news

When Lemon Cree's founder and leading lady Theresa Ducharme first envisioned training trainers to keep the folks in the Cree communities in shape, part of that vision had always been to have a means to keep these trainers fresh and on top of their game. And, this vision has just become a reality as Ducharme just finished running her first ever Lemon Cree fitness and wellness convention.

From November 12-14, 17 participants from Nemaska, Mistissini, Whapmagoostui, Oujé-Bougoumou, Ottawa, Kahnawake and Listuguj came together for two-and-a-half exciting days devoted to learning about health and wellness put on by Lemon Cree, in conjunction with the Cree Regional Authority's department of Recreation and Sports.

According to Ducharme, the event wasn't just for trainers, but it was open to anyone who was really interested in learning about health.

The event began with a prayer from Algonquin Elder Annie St-George who welcomed everyone to the Gatineau region where the event was taking place at the Université du Québec en Outaouais in Gatineau and then Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff spoke via Skype for what was described as "really great" inspirational speech about health.

On loan from the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, Mistissini-based sports nutritionist Vincent Mai gave a presentation to the participants on healthy eating to help give the Lemon Cree trainers a new edge when it comes to helping out their clientele.

"He was excellent! He had a very visual PowerPoint and presented lots of issues around sports nutrition. He had so much information for us that we all walked out with a tremendous amount of knowledge," said Ducharme.

Besides learning about healthy eating, the participants tried new exercises that



photo by Tristan Brand

The Lemon Cree Annual Fitness Convention held on November 2nd and 3rd. The first fitness gathering that brings together Top Fitness Specialists to demonstrate their expertise showcasing Bounce Fit, Latin Lemon, Boot Camps for Men and Women, Kettle bell workouts, Yoga and more.

they could take back home with them. They got to do spinning classes, a "boot camp" that featured a military-style training dance-fit, "Latin Lemon" dances and yoga.

"One of the highlights of the first day was something called 'laughing yoga' with Rosita Hall, who is an inspirational speaker as well as a best-selling author. It felt perfect to have laughing yoga with the Crees as we all left feeling so inspired because Hall is such an amazing human being, which was why I wanted to bring her in," said Ducharme.

Ducharme said they also were fortunate to have had Devon Larratt, the world arm-wrestling champion (both arms) as another special guest. While some of the male participants at the conference were thrilled to have met Larratt, everyone at the event got a kick out of having the opportunity to arm wrestle the world champ.

Bonding as a group was also an important aspect at the conference.

Ducharme said this group feels like the Lemon Cree family and having that social element as a family added so much to the experience.

Whether this group is in the same room or scattered across two provinces, their interconnectedness remains evident and their Facebook page is testament to that. Though usually they are posting about whatever issues they are facing on the home front, this time round it was all about just how much the group was getting out of the event.

"It was great to have everyone together as we really bonded and exchanged our stories, laughed and even shared a few tears.

"They are now going to be going back to their communities with so many new skills. Plus, there are a lot of things from the conference that they will be able to incorporate into their workouts," said Ducharme.



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BC Union of Chiefs sends letter to Harper

A cease-and-desist letter has been sent to Prime Minister Stephen Harper on behalf of the BC Union of Indian Chiefs. On October 30, the Union sent a letter to Harper urging the federal government to reject the Canada-China Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement, a treaty that would give China power in influencing the development of the Alberta tar sands, pipelines and mining, all at a great risk to the Aboriginal community.

The letter expresses concerns about the Canadian government giving “superior protection” to the rights of the Chinese investors, while disregarding the rights of Aboriginals and Aboriginal treaty rights.

“To recklessly disregard our Aboriginal Title, Rights and Treaty Rights is an affront,” the letter states. “Our rights are human rights. The Government of Canada continuously champions the fundamental principles and values of human rights and democracy. Yet Canada repeatedly violates them when our rights are ignored.”

The Canada-China agreement has received criticism from several different

groups across Canada. Many, including the BC Union of Chiefs, believe the treaty will be detrimental to the environment and many Canadian communities.

The letter was signed by Grand Chief President Stewart Phillip, VP Chief Robert Chamberlin and Secretary-Treasurer Chief Marilyn Baptiste.

First Nation delegation to Iran causes controversy

As part of a visit to Iran to draw attention to the Canadian government’s handling of Aboriginal rights, two former First Nation chiefs appeared on Iranian state-run TV to discuss issues facing Canadian First Nation communities.

During an interview with Iran’s Press TV on October 14, Terry Nelson and Dennis Pashe, both former Manitoban First Nation chiefs, talked about the lack of compensation for resources extracted from Native lands, the number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women, and the high unemployment rate in First Nations.

Both Nelson and Pashe drew harsh criticism for the Canadian government.

Pashe said current government policies are “part of (an) ongoing effort by the Canadian government to exterminate us.”

This appearance and criticism of the Canadian government prompted a strong backlash from Canadian officials.

The relationship between the two countries has become increasingly more hostile since Canada closed its embassy in Iran and expelled Iranian diplomats from its borders in September due to fears that Iran is developing a nuclear bomb.

A spokesman for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development said, “We’re disappointed that Mr. Nelson has allowed himself to be used as a pawn by the Iranian regime in yet another PR stunt to distract from their own record.”

In an interview with CBC news, Derek Nepinak, the Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, agreed with Nelson and Pashe about the harsh reality of economic obstacles facing First Nations while distancing himself from their extreme rhetoric. “I don’t think it necessarily represents the view or perspectives of the bulk of Indigenous people that live here... I think some of the messaging is not doing any good.”

Comic strip courtesy of Tundra Comics: www.tundracomics.com



Going the miles for Aboriginal youth

Native actor Dakota House on his new role in life

By Amy German



Scott Ward has all the youth under hypnosis

While he is best known for his role as Tee Vee Tenia on CBC's *North of 60*, Dakota House has moved on to a smaller and more intimate stage at this phase of his life – on that is all about inspiring the next generation.

After founding his own organization to motivate and educate Aboriginal youth, Going MILES, House now spends much of his time on the road, travelling from reserve to reserve as a speaker.

Recently, *the Nation* contacted Dakota to discuss this transition, the organization and what he can do for your community.

The Nation: What inspired you to start Going MILES?

Dakota House: Going MILES is a program that came together seven years ago when I was sitting at my kitchen table thinking about focusing my energy on working with the youth.

It was shortly after my sobriety that I wanted to formalize a program that I could take to communities and then it hit me – “Going MILES”. I was always receiving community requests before this to do appearances and keynotes, but now with the path that I walk it means so much more. It is now my destiny to inspire other Aboriginal people to let them know that you can do amazing things in life and you have exciting options if you take chances on yourself.

Motivate, Inspire, Lead, Empower, Succeed is the acronym for what we do in our program. We all go MILES on a daily basis!

TN: How has your own past shaped this organization?

DH: I've been in the film industry since the early 1990s. In my early years, I was raised in Keg River and then grew up in the inner city of Edmonton. I grew up a block away from skid row and so I became desensitized to the dysfunction that surrounded me.

I thought things were normal when they aren't. Some examples of this are drugs, alcohol, violence, gangs and crime. I've been through a lot and have had many ups and downs as most people do, but, through the support of my family and community, I have come through it all. I am a father to three beautiful daughters and a son who inspires me to live a drug-and-alcohol-free lifestyle.

TN: What is the story behind the organization? How did it get started?

DH: I founded Going MILES, but we have a team of people that can bring in empowerment workshops and entertainment to small communities. I wanted a program that can be brought to communities by others and not just myself. I've been told by many people that I have access to today's hottest talent by being in the film and entertainment industry and communities were calling me and

asking me if I knew of other people who I could bring to their events. I put together a great roster of Aboriginal speakers and entertainers who can inspire communities. Most of the people on board with Going MILES are today's hottest talent in moccasin country.

TN: Who are these programs aimed at?

DH: The youth have always been my focus, but the entire community will benefit from our workshops. Grades 6-12 seem to be our largest client base because we go into schools and facilitate our program right across the country. Our workshops can be geared for Aboriginal Youth and communities, but are open to all nationalities because we're talking about empowerment and motivation, which is universal.

TN: What kinds of presentations do you make and how do they work?

DH: We deliver workshops ranging from parenting, gangs, drugs and alcohol, suicide, youth empowerment, self-esteem and self-confidence, and hypnotherapy. When I travel with Scott Ward a.k.a. The First Nation Hypnotist, he will perform his show and we will host a DJ dance party. We can deliver one- to five-day events and even bring in a film crew to host a TV and film workshop and bring video projects to communities. You can



Out at the elders camp for a greet and meet and some traditional food



Dakota doing a bullying workshop in Mistissini

photos courtesy of Dakota House

view our video projects on our website (www.goingmiles.org)

TN: Which presentations do you do yourself? What do you discuss in them?

DH: I focus on all the presentations because all topics come up in the workshops and they are all related. We like to keep the workshops interactive and focused on moving forward. We also like to keep the workshops hands-on because the youth doesn't like boring workshops. Luckily, I have many games and exercises and demonstrations that keep them awake and motivated. I deliver a high-impact keynote at national conferences or for school assemblies, but most of my work is in the form of a community conference. I can customize my workshops for your events and themes or celebrations.

TN: Can you please name some of the presenters you have had in the past?

DH: Hypnotist Scott Ward is the other half of Going MILES, but we have booked people like Dallas Arcand (world champion hoop dancer), Caitlyn Tolley (speaker), Reddnation (hip hop group), Moccasin Joe (comedian), and Darren Brule (rap artist & speaker) to name a few.

TN: Where have you guys been in Canada (or the US) to present?

DH: We have been in almost all provinces and territories, except for

New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The USA is on our list this year to expand and to recruit other speakers and performers.

TN: I imagine that you as the presenter and those behind the organization have been influenced by the youth in the communities who you present to. How has this changed the organization?

DH: The youth are so talented, but the opportunities are so few and far between. We like to connect the youth in the arts to the larger entertainment community in Canada. We always promote our young brothers and sisters out there in any way we can. We are always looking for today's hottest talent to join our organization.

TN: What does your organization hope to achieve with these presentations in the long term?

DH: We wish to bring hope to the youth of today. It can be very stressful for school-age youth now with this MuchMusic age that we're in. We hope to stay in touch with the youth in communities who we inspire. With social media, we try our best to keep the dialogue going after we leave the communities that we visit. We also would like to have our own travel/reality show in the future. We already pitched this to APTN, but they have previous commitments.

TN: Do you have anything new or exciting coming up with the organization?

DH: We just partnered with the Belinda Stronach Foundation and the "One Laptop Per Child" program. We were contacted because of our strong connections and contacts in First Nation communities and our excellent work that we do in them. We are also now looking to find communities that would like to host our events in schools for 2013. We also plan to host our music-video workshops in communities where we bring in an Aboriginal musician and make a music video with the kids.

TN: What kinds of creative projects are you working on right now outside of this project?

DH: Scott Ward and I are producing and directing music videos and planning to direct another indie film project in 2013. I also started the Dakota House Foundation with my extended family and hope to have an executive director in position by spring 2013.

TN: Do you have any on the road anecdotes you would like to share with our readers?

DH: If you need to iron your clothes and you're staying in a small motel where there is no iron, you can iron your clothes by turning on the hot shower and putting them on hangers on the shower bar. The steam actually irons your clothes! This has worked well for us as we travel in the North.



Breaking down barriers

Two Quebec women are breathing new life into Aboriginal art

by Akiva Levitas

Contemporary Aboriginal art has come a long way since the Indian Act was amended in the 1950s. Prior to those changes any form of cultural expression from the original inhabitants of the land was illegal. While those dark days of cultural suppression have been left behind, the residual effect has stayed on through negative cultural stereotypes and geographic barriers.

Art, as a sincere form of expression, has the potential to build bridges over those barriers by being the voice of the culture. But having a voice can only go so far if there are plenty of people to hear it and learn from its message thereby giving the stage as much importance as the artist.

Increasing the visibility of Aboriginal artists in Quebec is not only important for the continuation of culture but also to break beyond the margins of society and move into the forefront. Two inspirational women have gone about accomplishing just that.

The success of Wapikoni Mobile, co-founded by Manon Barbeau, and Sacred Fire Productions, founded by Nadine St-Louis, are prime examples of how the establishment of Aboriginal artists and providing them with a platform can magnify their voices.

Despite the centuries of tradition, Aboriginal artwork has been through an exile of sorts with looting of cultural artifacts and bones of the dead to be placed on display in museums around the world, not as art but as curiosities of a past time.

“First Nations artists are the gatekeepers of the teachings, traditions, stories and cultural identity,” explained St-Louis. Art also serves as a form of cultural therapy that can help the Aboriginal community in Canada break free from the “learned helplessness that came with the colonization and residential schools”.

After being commissioned by the Canada Arts Council to map out the Aboriginal communities in Quebec, St-

Louis travelled to many these communities and came back reporting on the wealth of world-class talent that needed to be showcased.

St-Louis set up the not-for-profit Sacred Fire Productions in order to give those artists a platform to increase exposure among the mainstream art community. Since December 2011, Sacred Fire has been showcasing 22 Native artists in the 11 Nations exhibition at Marche Bonsecours in Montreal’s Old Port.

This is the first time that artwork from all 11 First Nations in Quebec are being represented in one exhibition. This coming together of artists and the central location in the Old Port sends a clear message: “We’re not in the past, we’re here.”

And here they are indeed at the beautiful exhibition with works showcasing the depth of the talent here in the Aboriginal art community of Quebec. The art covers a wide range of styles – from pop art to abstract,



traditional to groundbreaking. The gallery opened on December 13, 2011 and will last until the end of the year when it will move to a permanent gallery set up in the same building.

The 11 Nations gallery has already generated a positive buzz from the Montreal art community. In the near future, St-Louis plans to open up the 11 Nations Café to highlight a fusion of Aboriginal and Urban artwork, as well as a fusion between traditional food and haute cuisine.

On October 29, Wapikoni Mobile held a benefit concert in Montreal at Club Soda hosted by Algonquin rapper Samian that featured an eclectic mix of Aboriginal, Quebec and French rappers and musicians.

The evening was a great success for Wapikoni Mobile and the artists involved. The venue was packed with people who came to celebrate Aboriginal culture and enjoy good music.

Samian kicked off the show by introducing Jerry Hunter, dressed in full traditional regalia, who proceeded to entrance the audience with his traditional chanting and dance which set the mood for the rest of the evening of powerful poetry and inspired music.

The performances flowed from one musician to the next weaving a tapestry of social issues, love of nature, and

hope. Samian and Manu Militari sang their recent hits covering the issues of the Plan Nord and Quebec history.

The rhythmic poetry of Mohamed and Sage touched on issues that reflected the misrepresentation society builds on stereotypes. The beautiful vocals from Sola, Chloé Sainte-Marie, Sonia Basile-Martel, and Gaëlle

“FIRST NATIONS ARTISTS ARE THE GATEKEEPERS OF THE TEACHINGS, TRADITIONS, STORIES AND CULTURAL IDENTITY.”

enthralled the audience as the club went quiet for each performer.

Along with a silent auction and the presentation of a selection of short films produced thanks to the work of Wapikoni Mobile, awards were presented to three young filmmakers for their work. Réal Junior Leblanc received the Astral Public Choice award for his short, *Blocus 138 – La résistance innue*.

The Lozeau Prize for involvement was awarded to Helga Awashish for her documentary-style short, *Un travail difficile*. The film helped bring the

problem of unleashed dogs in her community to light to the outside world.

The prize for best short film from working with the Université du Québec à Montréal was given to Meky Ottawa for *Micta*, an experimental montage of sound and visuals. “Wapikoni has given us a voice and inspiration,” Ottawa said. “It helps us make a change in our community.”

Wapikoni Mobile’s objective is to provide the tools needed to encourage Aboriginal independent film production and distribution. Since its founding in 2004, Wapikoni Mobile has established itself as a success story with 19 communities being reached, 400 films produced, and winning over 40 prizes and special mentions to date.

For her work in promoting Aboriginal culture and inspiring youth, Barbeau was declared a Laureate at the 12th annual Gala for Prix Femmes d’affaires du Québec on October 26.

In addition to her work with Wapikoni, Barbeau has started other initiatives along the similar lines, such as setting up La Maison des Cultures Nomades in 2008. The purpose of which was to bring together on stage Aboriginal musicians and artists from a variety of cultural communities.

Both of these women have been working hard to bridge the geographical and cultural gap between First



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Nations communities and the mainstream art world. One of the many steps in this task is to provide the training, tools and confidence to the artists, which Wapikoni Mobile has been successful at doing.

Art needs to be encouraged and there is no better way to motivate artists than to provide an economic opportunity for the artist. Through the increased exposure to tourists and city folk, the 11 Nations exhibition has generated \$95,000 in revenues in under a year that were paid to the artists.

While giving a tour of the exhibit, St-Louis explained, "We are creating a market for these works of art. If someone comes here and sees a piece they like, they can purchase a full poster of it, or a smaller framed print or even a postcard."

This year, Wapikoni Mobile has set up shop in Montreal to help inspire urban Aboriginal youth. In addition to screening the videos produced through Wapikoni Mobile in a special viewing area at the exhibition, St-Louis has let the program use her office to work on their projects while they are in the city.

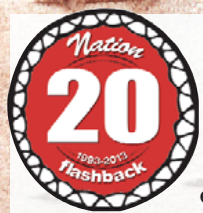
Wapikoni Mobile ended its stay in Montreal on November 11. But before they moved on, they held a screening of all the work produced in Montreal at the 11 Nations gallery November 14.

Contemporary urban Aboriginal art is an area that has received little attention in the mainstream of the art world. Mainly because many of the stereotypes relegate First Nations peoples and cultures to some faraway place outside the view of large cities.

Art is the voice of a culture, a window to the aspirations and dreams of a people, by encouraging individuals to take up and produce artwork, whether traditional or modern, it allows the culture to be passed on to future generations. Placing the artists and their pieces in the limelight builds a bridge that allows the culture to grow and be shared.

Note: On November 7th, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs announced that it was granting Wapikoni Mobile \$90,000 a year for the next 5 years for a total of \$450,000.





The *Nation* is turning 20! To commemorate this historic occasion, the *Nation* is embarking on a retrospective countdown to its 20th Anniversary in November 2013. In the next 25 issues, the *Nation* flashback will feature the “Best of” the *Nation*’s stories, photos and award winning coverage throughout the years, and will be compiled in a 20th collector’s edition issue. This *Nation* flashback is made possible by the generosity of **Rezolution Pictures** and **Minority Media**.



December 2, 1994

NEWS

CREES JUBILANT OVER GREAT WHALE VICTORY

November 18 was a day of jubilation in James Bay as the news spread that Premier Jacques Parizeau had indefinitely postponed the Great Whale River Project.

Some couldn’t believe their ears. One Whapmagoostui Cree who fought the project for the band stood holding the phone for two minutes in silence when he heard the news, then said, “This must be some cruel joke.”

A feast was planned in Whapmagoostui. Brian Craik, the Grand Council’s federal relations director, said he was flying so high he had to be scraped off the ceiling.

“It will take time to sink in. It’s hard to believe,” said Robbie Dick, who fought the project for several years as Chief of Whapmagoostui.

“The people have accomplished a great task. With this project, we used our own beliefs, our own way of looking at the Earth and the environment. We followed the direction of our Elders and we have come to this point where we have succeeded to a degree. This is how strong it is when we follow our traditions,” he said.

Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come called Parizeau’s announcement a “courageous” decision. “This generation of Crees and this generation of Quebecers has said no to mega-projects. It was a great joy to know we were right,” he said.

The Grand Chief said the postponement will give Crees precious time to think about other issues. “With Great Whale out of the way, it allows time for the land to heal, time for the Cree people to adapt to the changes that happened after the first project.”

But he warned that it’s still unclear whether Great Whale is completely off the table, or whether this is just a temporary postponement of five or 10 years.

The Grand Chief called on Parizeau to stop the ongoing

environmental review process of Great Whale. If that process of hearings continues, Hydro-Quebec could still secure all the permits it needs to go ahead with construction. Then the utility could just wait a few years until the political situation is more favourable and start construction with little notice, permits already in hand.

That scenario was given added life by the comments of Parizeau aide Hubert Thibault, just hours after the Premier’s pronouncement on Friday. “We are giving Hydro-Quebec no instructions to stop their preparation of the project,” Thibault said.

“Parizeau said Great Whale is on ice. Ice can be thawed,” commented Grand Chief Coon Come.

That was a concern also raised by Kuujuaarapik Mayor Anthony Ittoshat. “My first reaction was that we went through this before in the late 1970s. We’re going through the same thing again. It’s just a question of how long we’re going to wait,” he said.

“The way Parizeau put it was we’re not going to scrap the project forever.”

Ittoshat said Parizeau may have postponed the \$13-billion mega-project because of a report released earlier on the day of Nov. 18 that slammed the project. In their report, four federal and provincial committees studying Great Whale issued devastating criticisms of a \$256-million environmental review conducted by Hydro-Quebec. The committees said the review was grossly inadequate and recommended over 300 revisions.

Hydro-Quebec issued a press release the following Monday, Nov. 21, saying it will have to find other ways of meeting its projections of energy demand. The utility mentions the Ste-Marguerite hydro-project, already under con-

Update 2012 on Great Whale

In 1993, Hydro-Québec (HQ) was seen as the enemy because of the La Grande Project and the desire for the Great Whale Project. Over the years, the confrontational stances between the Cree Nation and HQ gradually changed. There was give and take on both sides – meaning that though both parties may not have been overjoyed they could live with the results.

Today, many Cree companies’ first contracts were with HQ or the Société d’énergie de la Baie James (SEBJ) and others grew as a result of a new relationship with them. Cree employment figures rose also.

While some may say the Paix des braves gave too much away, it was a milestone leading to a friendlier and closer relationship between the Cree, HQ and Quebec. This has also had real economic benefits and Cree participation in development in Eeyou Istchee. Even so, Great Whale is still something the Cree are not willing to consider. HQ, though, is no longer the enemy.

BY ALEX ROSLIN

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

DECEMBER 2, 1994

the Nation



August 12, 1994

BRIEFS

NATIVES HAVE NOTHING TO TEACH ME, SAYS LE HIR

PQ star candidate Richard Le Hir has landed in hot water over comments he makes in a new film about the Great Whale River Project.

"I would have something to learn from them [natives] if it could be shown that their culture demonstrated its superiority in one form or another," Le Hir says in the film, called *Power Of The North*.

"[But] when you look at what heritage has been left by native civilizations—if you could call them civilizations—there is very little."

Le Hir also takes a hard line against Cree opposition to Great Whale. "We happen to need [the power] for our own development. Who is going to tell us that we can't do it?"

Le Hir's comments were aired on national TV on Aug. 6 and were carried by Canadian Press the next day.

Within days, Liberal leader Daniel Johnson and Native Affairs Minister Christos Sirros seized on the comments as proof of the PQ's intolerance.

"[It shows] a total insensitivity to people," said Premier Johnson. "This is the hallmark of the campaign at this point."

Said Sirros, "You're not going to get very far in terms of working out agreements if you're denigrating and insulting their culture."

Le Hir was interviewed for the film in 1992 when he was still president of the Quebec Manufacturers' Association. *Power Of The North* was directed and produced by filmmakers Anna Van der Wee and Catherine Bainbridge (who is also an editor of *The Nation*). A review of *Power Of The North* appeared in *The Nation*'s July 15 issue.

—Nation staff

Update 2012 on Le Hir

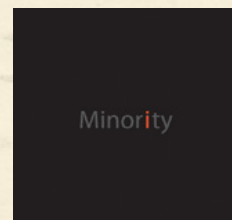
In reaction to this article, Mr. Le Hir claimed that his comments were taken out of context, though we here at the *Nation* struggle to imagine a context where these comments could ever be justified.

Since then, Mr. Le Hir has been a consultant, author, became famous for denouncing the PQ for stemming the flow of "NO" ballots during the 1995 referendum, and blah blah blah.

Here are some Google search words for him to look up in case he's still not enlightened about the "heritage [that] has been left by Native civilizations"... uh besides basic survival skills that would have wiped out all of the settlers from the land from the get-go: First Nation museums, traditional healing, CCI, NAAF, JBQNA, GCC, COTA, AFNQL, CreeCo, Air Creebec, APTN, CLI, Windspeaker, The Eastern Door, Nunatsiaq News and... the NATION... to name just a few.



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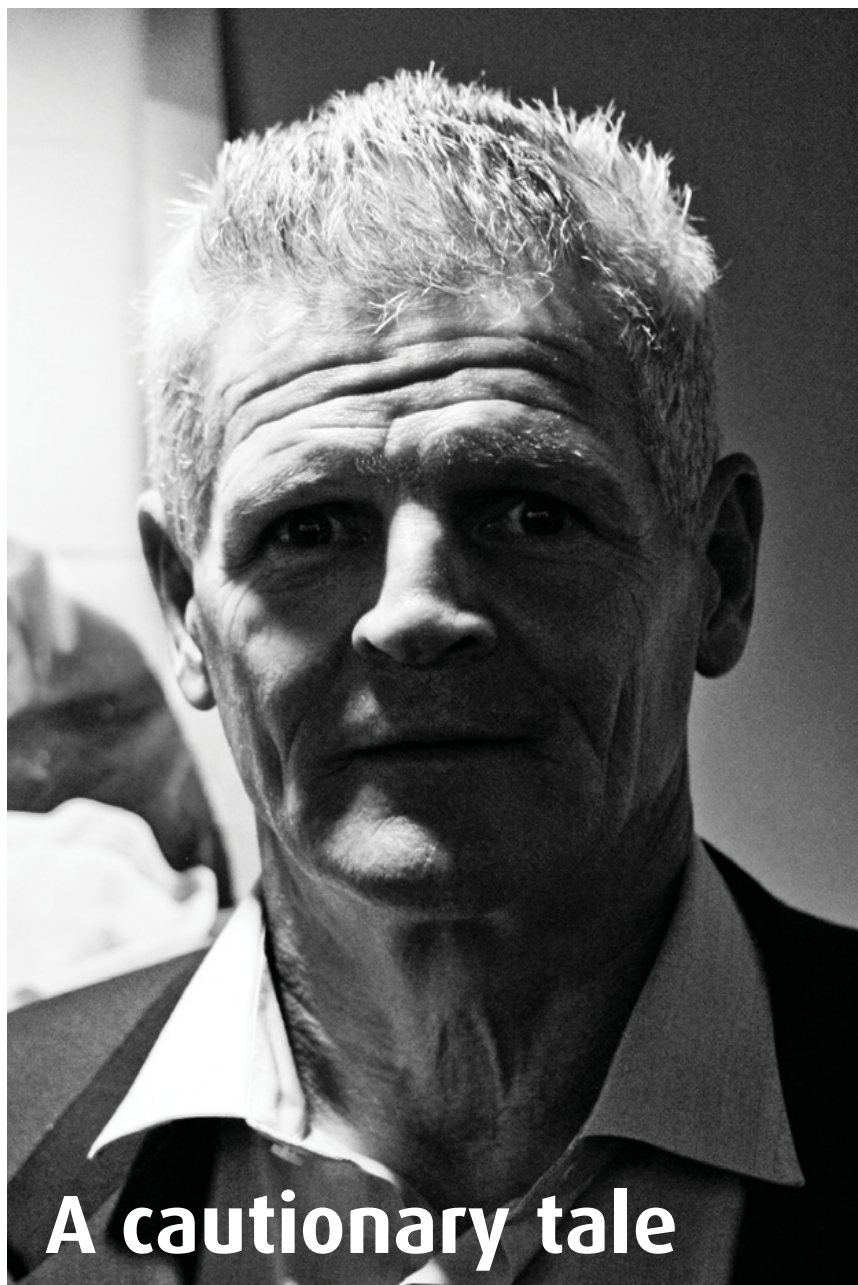
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AUGUST 12, 1994

COUNTDOWN TO 20TH.... 25 ISSUES LEFT



A cautionary tale

***The Last Gladiators* depicts the life of an NHL tough guy**

Story and photos by Daniel Coyle

If someone sees my story, who has fallen that far and can see that he can get his life back again, it will have been worth it.

The film opens with a close-up shot of his hands. Then a voice, as if the hands are speaking to the audience, begins to tell the story of how each scar was earned, each knuckle deformed. Some are as a result of too many punches thrown into the sides of opponents' hockey helmets; others from successfully laying punches to an opponent's mouth, impaling his fists on an adversary's teeth.

But the scars are displayed with pride. After all, they came with the job

— 12 years as one of the NHL's most renowned tough guys.

The hands belong to former Montreal Canadiens Chris Nilan, whose life in and after hockey is profiled in the film *The Last Gladiators*, now playing at cinemas across Canada. Directed by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Alex Gibney, *The Last Gladiators* does not glorify the hockey tough guy. Nor, unlike so much recent media coverage, does it condemn the enforcer's role in the game or cite it as the cause of the

physical and psychological problems faced by the men who have made their living dropping the gloves.

The Last Gladiators is a much more personal story about how a kid from Boston, who grew up wanting to be a hockey player like Bobby Orr, ended up using both his hockey talent and fists to become a fan favourite in Montreal, winning a Stanley Cup with the Habs, carving out a 12-year NHL career. And how his admittedly head-strong personality and countless

injuries lead him down the road of substance abuse, and back, after his playing days were over.

"I went from pills to heroin," said Nilan during a Q&A following the recent premiere of the film in Montreal. "It was not a terribly nice place to be."

The film includes interviews with some of the people who know Nilan best, including family members, coaches, former teammates and some of the other tough guys who Nilan went toe-to-toe with during his career like Tony Twist and Bob Probert, arguably the most prolific tough guy in NHL history, whose untimely death occurred during the film's production.

Taken as a whole, the interviews tell the complex story of how the things that made Nilan a star on the ice were also the same things that contributed to his downward spiral into drug-and-alcohol abuse; his no-holds-barred approach to playing the game, which became evident during his time playing college hockey at Northeastern University in Boston, and which secured him a spot in the NHL; a distant, even acrimonious relationship with his father that has shaped him from a young age; a running feud with Montreal Canadiens coach Jean Perron that eventually forced the Habs to deal him to the New York Rangers, a team and city where he never felt he fit in; the growing list of injuries that forced him to miss over 200 games in the final five seasons of his career, and which was the impetus for his drug abuse; broken relationships and trouble with the law that were indicators that Nilan had hit rock-bottom.

"When I was at my absolute worse, my girlfriend Jamie left me because of my drug abuse," explained Nilan. "But months later, she contacted me and convinced me to get help and get sober. Some days, I would go to two or three (rehab) sessions, just so I would not be tempted."

The making of *The Last Gladiators* has been an important part of Nilan's recovery.

"I had just got out of treatment," said Nilan when asked about how he got involved with the film. "I was trying to get well; put another day between me and the drugs."

But it has not been Nilan's intention to blame his problems on his role as



Chris Nilan talks to fans at the Montreal premiere of the documentary *The Last Gladiators*.

hockey enforcer. In fact, he views the tough guy as important to the game and the health of its stars.

"I believe it was tragic," said Nilan, in reference to the deaths of tough guys Derek Boogaard, Rick Rypien and Wade Belak during the summer of 2011. "All three cases were different. I believe they were life issues. You can study this until you're blue in the face, but I don't believe you will ever find a connection between those three guys, what happened to them, and what they did in hockey."

In fact, Nilan believes that stars who he played with enjoyed longer careers because players like him were there to watch out for them.

"How come there are so many concussions in today's game?" asks Nilan. "Everybody says because it's bigger, faster and stronger. I think that's bullshit."

"Guys like Guy Lafleur did not have to retire because of concussions. I truly believe it had something to do with guys who ran shotgun for them – like Tony Twist, like Probert, O'Reilly and myself. But the NHL does not recognize that."

As Nilan continues his recovery, he has become less concerned with rule changes in the NHL and more concerned with how he can pass along what he has learned from his hard life lessons, so that others will be spared walking the path he has taken, including travelling extensively to Aboriginal communities in the North in support of his No Bullies Tour, where he talks directly with children about the impact of bullying and what they can do to stop it.

"I love spending time with the Cree," said Nilan. "I would love to do it again, if they would have me back."

Films that are made about people who survive the pain of addiction often profile those who have come back and achieved greatness. That is not how *The Last Gladiators* ends. Nilan remains a work in progress, just a guy trying to battle his demons and make a positive contribution to his world.

"If someone sees my story, who has fallen that far and can see that he can get his life back again, it will have been worth it."

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THE SDBJ AND THE EYEOU ECONOMIC GROUP CFDC INC. ANNOUNCE JOINT FINANCING OF A NEW BUSINESS IN WASWANAPI

Matagami, November 6, 2012 – The joint financing, in the amount of \$94,225, is for Beesum Transport of Waswanipi. Roderick Happyjack started up this new company, which will provide bulk trucking services. The financing will allow him to acquire a 10-wheel dump truck. "This is a good example of what we hope to accomplish through our November 2011 partnership with Eeyou Economic Group CFDC Inc. We also believe that this project will encourage other Cree promoters to start up business projects," said Raymond Thibault, President and CEO of the SDBJ. "We are pleased to provide financial support to a young Waswanipi entrepreneur. Mr. Happyjack can always count on our support and expertise," added Alain Coulombe, Assistant General Manager of Economic Development for the SDBJ.

"Roderick Happyjack is a dynamic, talented young entrepreneur. He worked tirelessly to bring his business project to fruition. We are very proud to be one of his financial partners," said David Neeposh, Assistant Director General of the Eeyou Economic Group CFDC Inc.

About the Eeyou Economic Group CFDC Inc.

A Community Futures Development Corporation, supported by Economic Development Canada, EEG was created in 1987 to provide support services to Cree entrepreneurs. <http://www.eeyoueconomicgroup.ca>

About the SDBJ

The SDBJ was created on July 14, 1971, by the James Bay Region Development Act to foster the Baie-James territory's economic development and the development of its natural resources, other than hydroelectric resources, from a sustainable development perspective.

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A family affair

Father and daughter enjoy the fruits of their artistic endeavours

by Akiva Levitas

A compelling story is the key to a good film, but the actors are truly the ones who, through their emotions, bring the story to life. Such was the case for Kevin and Kortanie Raye, a father-daughter team that starred in *Streetlight Sonata*, a 15-minute short film directed by Andrew Marchand-Boddy.

Being a single father is a tough job, but through it all Kevin has persevered. Growing up in the projects of New York City followed by a move to Kahnawake, just south of Montreal, Kevin took what he experienced and translated it into his handicrafts and DJ-ing.

Kevin started doing arts and crafts at the age of 13 even though he said, "Nobody was doing art in Kahnawake when I was a kid."

Although it wasn't the most popular pastime for youth, Kevin stuck with it and got encouraged after a few local stores gave him money for his artwork which made him realize "my art is worth is something".

"I have a love for all of the arts," said Kevin who has worked in many various media, including carvings, sculpture, painting, drawing, graffiti and, of course, old-school vinyl scratching.

Kevin credits Louis Hall and Roy Montour for being his biggest influences. "Louis Hall took Native art to a whole other level. He made it realistic and strong," Kevin explained.

As well as being in Kahnawake, where the natural setting provides no shortage of inspiration, Kevin pointed out, "Kahnawake is so close [to the city] but it's pretty country."

Kevin moved for a time to the North where he put his ability of connecting people and finding good deals to use by providing supplies and snowmobile parts to the northern communities. He kept the artists well supplied and in turn sold their artwork to visitors and mining-company workers.



Kevin and Kortanie Raye, the father-daughter team

His creativity has definitely passed on to his daughter, Kortanie, who is quite the avid writer. In fact, Kevin said, "We got the role in movie because of her creative writing, which was featured in the film."

Aside from being a soccer player for the Verdun youth team, Kortanie also participates in the Suspicious Fish after-school program, a community-engagement initiative sponsored by Concordia University. "It helps me concentrate and pass tests," she said of the program.

Kortanie writes in her free time at school and at home. She also helps her father with his artwork and DJ's with him occasionally.

While being a single father can be stressful, Kevin says that working on his art helps him relax. In the case of shooting the film, it was quite the father-daughter bonding moment.

Because of his experience, Kevin got a writing credit because of his contributions to the script where he changed the dialogue to make it more realistic.

The story is about an Inuit mother who leaves her daughter with her estranged dad for a day. It is quite a powerful short, one whose message of

struggle and reconciliation can speak to anyone.

The chemistry between Kevin and Kortanie in the film was the driving factor of the piece. However, their relationship in real life is quite the opposite to what is depicted on screen, since it was Kevin who had to raise his daughter by himself.

But as Kortanie pointed out, "I could relate to the role because my mother wasn't around."

Kortanie aspires to be an actress or a doctor when she gets older. Since making *Streetlight Sonata*, she has already appeared in two other short films with Suspicious Fish. Kevin says the acting bug has bitten both him and his daughter after shooting the film in 2011.

Art is used to tell stories, not just epic tales from the past but also personal ones that can be used to depict the struggles of daily life. A good film depends on the actors as much as a story depends on the characters, and in the case of *Streetlight Sonata*, the actors added a whole new level of realism to the story. If you are interested in seeing the video, it is available on YouTube.

Lessons from Chisasibi

Two artists discuss development and its effects on northern Quebec

by Dan Moczula



The Montreal-based Canadian Centre for Architecture hosted artist Thomas Kneubühler and filmmaker Ernest Webb for a conversation about the impact of development on Chisasibi and other communities in northern Quebec on October 25.

Through their art, both men seek to make people think critically about development and the impact that it has on communities in the North.

These two men discussed how their art approached the same topic of development from two different perspectives.

Webb was raised in Chisasibi. He produced a six-part documentary capturing the natural beauty of the Rupert River before it was damned by Hydro-Québec in 2011.

During the discussion Webb drew from his personal experiences growing up and seeing the community of Chisasibi develop. He remembers the 1970s when Hydro-Québec first dammed the river without consulting Indigenous peoples.

Webb commented on the evolution of development. Since the 1970s development has changed and Hydro-Québec has been more attentive of the needs of Indigenous communities. Despite this positive development Webb calls attention to continuing negative aspects of development which remain undressed.

Webb stated his belief that development needs to be more ecologically responsible. "My own personal views are why do we need to poison the fish? Why do we need to poison the rivers? Is this preventable?"

Webb views his art as a link to the past. He hopes that future residents of Chisasibi will be reminded of their roots through his films. His art is "a matter of record, generations from now people will be able to look back and see progress."

Kneubühler is a Swiss-born visual artist who explores the relationship between technology and society in his photography. His *Under Currents* is a

series of photographs exploring the effect of development on Chisasibi.

Kneubühler came across hydro-electric installations in the James Bay by accident and has since been interested in documenting the changes that this development brings.

During the discussion, Kneubühler commented on the variety of perspectives, which the debate brought together.

Kneubühler's point-of-view "of an outsider coming from the south" complemented Webb's recollection of personal experiences.

Kneubühler stressed the importance of engaging with numerous perspectives to draw attention to development. "It is important that different people talk about development. That way people can become more conscious."

The conversation between these two artists with different backgrounds encouraged the audience to think critically about development.

Canadian Centre for Architecture will upload the entire discussion on its website: www.cca.qc.ca

Accidental hotel

Native entrepreneur becomes a hotelier in Quebec

by Daniel David

Participants at the Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Conference and Trade Show in Ottawa October 15-16 received a Navigation Guide. It laid out five steps to long-term community planning, economic development and possible entrepreneurial success.

It's short, sharp and to the point.

Ken Ratte never read it and probably never will.

Ratte wasn't a participant. He bought space for his crafts booth at the trade show. Ratte is tall, with long dark hair tied in a tail at the back of a face full of smile and mustache.

"Business is slow," he said, but it's only the first day of the conference. "It usually picks up on the second day."

People wandered by or stopped to talk. Overheard were bits of Ratte's life – travels, powwows and gatherings, the life of a wandering businessman.

"I like going to things like this," he said. "I like meeting people."

While the conference's Navigation Guide is linear and logical, Ratte's path into business isn't. His story is typical of a lot of Aboriginal entrepreneurs who stumble into opportunities for good or ill.

Ratte's story is full of twists and turns, starts and stops, a powwow trail that led to an old hotel in the Lower St. Lawrence. It doesn't have an ending because the story is only beginning.

It started in Peguis and Brokenhead, north of Winnipeg. Like many kids from Cree communities in southern Manitoba, Ratte headed to the city to further his education, find work and chase dreams.

"When I was 17, I got involved in very specialized steelwork. I worked for a company out west that had its mother company in Montreal. I moved to Montreal to do that particular kind of work."

Behind him, listening and smiling, his wife showed beadwork to a customer.

"I've been wandering for 30 years, never staying in one place longer than four weeks. After 27 years, I realized I wouldn't do anything else if I stayed there."

He and his wife began a powwow crafts business about the same time they "decided to move to the regions and try to be stationary people, do something new with our lives instead of burning gas driving all over the place."

They ran into a Montreal-based group that wanted to sell a hotel. It was 130 years old, located in Saint-Simon, about 50 kilometres from Rimouski. The hotel fit their plans so they bought it.

An accidental meeting with a New York Times travel writer led to an international online booking service



Ken Ratte

photo by Daniel David

and a steady stream of reservations from foreign customers.

"They come to the hotel from all over the planet. I could be talking to a guy from Tokyo, France or Belgium. It gives me a feeling that I'm still traveling. In return, I show them who we are as (Indigenous) peoples."

Ratte and his wife are fixing up their old hotel, trying to restore it with a couple of minor changes.

"I put a teepee in the back."



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A positive spin

Diabetic teen champions others with the disease

by Amy German

When he was diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 15, not only was Jonathan Linton so devastated that it brought him to tears, but for the next three years he hid this detail from the world for fear of ridicule.

Now 18 and very much in control of his blood sugar, Linton is not only feeling confident about his health, he has become a public speaker about the disease and is helping others with their diagnoses through the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB).

Linton's journey through diabetes began on a family hunting trip in 2009 when he noticed that he had an unusually dry mouth and that he frequently had to pee. Being the son of two CBHSSJB health-care workers, Linton was already familiar with the symptoms of diabetes from seeing them on a poster in his mother's office.

Knowing in his heart that there was definitely something wrong with the way he was feeling, he asked his mom to bring home a glucometer to see if he was a diabetic as Linton had reason to doubt that he was sick.

Unlike many that get diagnosed in their youth with the disease, Linton was not suffering from any obesity issues, having been in the shape of his life playing double letter hockey for the Cree Nation Bears.

"I wasn't overweight, I was in shape. Instead I was told that I may just have got it because genetics, my grandmother has it," said Linton.

But when he finally checked his blood sugar, the glucometer read it at a walloping 32 when it was supposed to read between 4.2 and seven.

Once diagnosed, Linton opted to go with insulin as a means of treating the

disease because he felt that it suited his needs better.

He also started working with diabetes educator Monique Laliberté to learn how to manage his diabetes through medication and diet.

"It was hard. I cried with my mother on my bed when I found out. It was a very difficult day. I just didn't want to believe that I had something like that at my age. Eventually I had to accept it. Now I take care of it on my own and I started doing this after my first meeting with Monique," said Linton.

Three years on and Linton has now stepped up to the plate to become a positive role model for others with the

"IT WAS HARD. I CRIED WITH MY MOTHER ON MY BED WHEN I FOUND OUT. IT WAS A VERY DIFFICULT DAY. I JUST DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE THAT I HAD SOMETHING LIKE THAT AT MY AGE. EVENTUALLY I HAD TO ACCEPT IT."

disease and he now is employed doing just that for the CBHSSJB. He said he was asked by Public Health to do so because he was managing so well that he was asked not only to share his experience with others but to help people get oriented with their new situation through special camps that Linton runs.

At Linton's camps, diabetics and their families get together and go for walks



Jonathan Linton

around Mistissini to discover different ways to exercise and also partake in grocery-store tours to learn about healthy eating. Linton also leads discussions with the diabetics about how they feel about having the disease and what their plans are to cope.

Part of his strategy is also to discuss his own story.

"I got through it by working hard on controlling it. I wanted to live a long and healthy life instead of ending up on dialysis or losing a leg. This is what motivated me. I also wanted to play hockey and so I tried to stay healthy for that," said Linton.

As the 18-year-old is about to become a first-time father, he feels the need to stay healthy for the daughter who is on her way.

But this is only the beginning for Linton as he hopes to graduate from home schooling soon and maybe even go into a health career so that he can continue to help others make positive changes.

Alone for treatment

Sean Blackned talks about his life in Montreal on dialyses

by Amy German

Though he has been a diabetic for the past 19 years, Sean Blackned was once the image of health and strength in the community, having worked as a police officer in his home community of Wemindji. He is now a shadow of his former self as his diabetes complications have him barely able to see and living in a care facility in Montreal so that he can go in for dialysis every two days.

At 36, life is bleak for Blackned, but he will tell you over and over again that he has not lost hope in life. While he misses his friends and family back home dearly, it is his health that he misses the most.

According to Blackned, the downward spiral of his condition began at 17 when he was first diagnosed with diabetes. Like many people in their late teens, Blackned admitted that he wasn't taking the best care of his health as he was overweight and into drinking a lot of alcohol, something that is very high in sugars.

"My sugar was very high when I was diagnosed, up at 48. I could have been dead. I went into the hospital just in time. It took about 14 days for me to get it down," explained Blackned.

Life however resumed normalcy after his diagnosis as Blackned was very active at that stage of his life, playing hockey and various other sports.

From there Blackned even had very physical jobs that required him to be the picture of strength. First, working as a police officer in his community for eight years and then working in security for his band office and then at a Hydro-Québec camp.

At the age of 32, his health began to turn on him and the kidney trouble began. Blackned said his body began to puff up with his legs swelling up to his stomach.

"It was in December 2009 that I came to Montreal and found out that I



only had 10-15% kidney function. Then in July 2010 I began dialysis and so this is now my 28th month on it. I have been in Montreal for 34 months," said Blackned.

Uprooted from home community indefinitely as there are currently no dialysis facilities in Wemindji, Blackned has gone from hospital to independent living with a patient escort to finally a care facility while living in Montreal. While he made friends with other Cree dialysis patients in Montreal, he has watched them slowly pass away.

"There were three dialysis patients I knew from the communities, one from Mistissini, one from Oujé and one from the Coast, but all died in October. They were really sick. I want to send my condolences to those families. To me these people were all friends," said Blackned.

While he has had the opportunity to go home several times since he began his treatment, because the lack of a patient

escort since the death of his sister earlier in 2012, Blackned's mobility is restricted.

Instead of seeing folks in person, he speaks to friends and loved ones whenever he can on the phone.

Still, Blackned is hopeful as he has been told by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay that there will be space available for him to move to Chisasibi at Christmas where he will be able to attend dialysis regularly in that community. Back with his own people, Blackned is hoping for a better quality of life despite the fact that Chisasibi isn't home.

"I wish there was dialysis in Wemindji as I am not the only dialysis patient from there. It really isn't easy to be away from my family and being alone. I miss my nephew and my niece. When I talk to [my niece] on the phone she always says she misses me," said Blackned.



UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

Knowledge is power when it comes to fighting diabetes

by Xavier Kataquapit

photo courtesy of Dakota House

If you are very overweight, don't get much exercise and you have generally a diet high in fats and sugars then you are probably on your way to being diabetic. If you are a First Native person with all of the same realities you are more susceptible to diabetes. Thanks to Peggy Claveau of Misiway Milopemahtesewin, an Aboriginal health-care organization, and her fellow team members of diabetes professionals fighting this terrible disease, I am more aware of the symptoms and causes of this malady. This of course has also led me to understanding many ways I can prevent diabetes and for those with the disease to manage it.

Every year the Timmins Diabetes Expo team stages events geared to schoolchildren, professional health-care personnel and the public at large. They do their research and manage to find motivational speakers who are very often humorous in getting their message across. Recently, I attended several of the events held this year in Timmins and I was once again motivated to make sure that I don't get this terrible disease that has very much become an epidemic with Aboriginal people in this country.

Dr. Michael Vallis of Halifax, a clinical psychologist who specializes in diabetes, brought a new and refreshing look at how to fight this disease. As a professional with a background in the behavioural sciences, his informative workshops dealt mainly with the realization that personal self-care and change in behaviour is very affective in preventing and managing diabetes. He really took a lot of the blame out of the scenario and suggested that people take an honest look at themselves and face all of the habits and situations that get us in trouble concerning diet and exercise.

Vallis recalled a study done with rodents that were fed cocaine and sugar. These animals in time became addicted to these substances, but the surprise was that sugar turned out to be the choice over the drug. That gives you an idea what we are all up against when trying to turn away from sugar deserts and treats. He also pointed out that every time we sit down with a bag of potato chips we are in fact eating a big bowl of pure fat and salt. However, in crunchy chip form we don't think this treat is all that bad.

Vallis did not ask any of us present at his workshops to make huge changes quickly as it has been proven that this does not work. Instead, he encourages people to make little changes that they can hold on to like taking coffee with no sugar and perhaps no cream, dropping soda pop out of the diet completely and making treats like chips a big challenge to get by keeping them out of the house. He pointed out that when a person makes the commitment to refusing to bring treats like chocolates, chips and sweets into the house then it is easier to find a more healthy way to answer the junk-food craving. If there are fruits and vegetables around and no treats then a person is more likely to choose wisely.

Diabetes is such an ugly disease that it robs people of their eyesight, causes heart disease and circulation problems, and plays havoc with kidneys. One good way to realize that you might be on your way to becoming diabetic is if you have developed what is referred to as a spare tire around your stomach. This type of fat is a sure sign that you are not eating well and probably not exercising much. If you fall into this category I suggest you get tested for diabetes so that you can find out early on how to manage this disease before bad things start to happen – and they happen quickly.

These days the average North American is in terrible physical shape and has a really bad diet high in fats and sugar. Children are becoming diabetic at an alarming rate because they are addicted to fast food and they spend too much time in front of the television or on the Internet. Big companies that profit from our food addictions don't help because they keep pushing their products, especially to young people, through all media. The only thing we can do to protect ourselves from these addictions that lead to diabetes is to become educated. Thanks to the efforts of people putting together events that assist us with education so that we can prevent or manage diabetes we all have a fighting chance.

So, if you are one of those people who is overweight, is not exercising much and has a not-so-great diet, perhaps it is time to visit your health-care professional to find out if you are diabetic so that you can deal with this disease. It is in your hands.

Four more years to change history

By the end of the US presidential election, the whole world was holding its collective breath over what appeared would be a photo finish between Barack Obama and his Republican challenger Mitt Romney.

Would the American right, with its program of welfare for the rich, military over-reach and medieval social values, be restored under Romney? Or could Obama overcome a difficult economy, high unemployment and the concentrated hatred of the American economic elite and a Southern Bible Belt that still has not recovered from the Civil War and the emancipation of people like the current president?

In the end, the Democrats relied on a targeted campaign of winnable swing states and key constituencies, such as women, Latinos and, of course, the black community to win relatively easily, despite the by-now predictable headache of trying to figure out how to count ballots in the state of Florida.

In many ways this election was a referendum on the major milestones of Obama's first two years in power: including universal health coverage ("Obamacare"), the Lily Ledbetter Act mandating equal pay for equal work regardless of gender, the auto bailout, economic stimulus measures and the re-regulation of the financial sector.

After Florida eventually casts its Electoral College votes for Obama, the official tally under the arcane American presidential system will show he bested Romney 332 to 206. His political legitimacy will be assured by a solid though slim popular vote share of 50% against Romney's 48%, which nonetheless is a victory of nearly three million votes.

To be sure, new initiatives will be tough to come by with a House of Representatives that will still be controlled by the most retrograde Tea Party wing of the Republicans. But much of the Obama agenda will continue to take effect over the next few years: phased-in clauses of the health-care package won't be completely implemented by 2014 (Romney had promised to repeal the whole package).

As well, the grandfathered Bush-era tax cuts for the rich will expire in the next couple years. Obama campaigned for higher contributions from the wealthiest; happily the Republican-controlled House will be unable to block the tax hikes that will automatically redress a system that sees billionaires like Romney paying fewer taxes, proportional to income, than secretaries or waitresses.

The Obama administration and the American people (not to mention Canadians) should also benefit from a recovering economy and a peace dividend from the winding down of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. That could set the table for Democratic successes in the mid-term Congressional elections of 2014 and the ability to cement the promise of his 2008 campaign and complete his progressive legacy.

To be sure, political progressives like myself have had plenty to be disappointed in from Obama's first term. As president, his first act was to announce the closing of the Guantanamo Bay concentration camp. Almost four years later, it remains shamefully in operation, though much reduced.



Neither has respect for civil rights in the US matched the soaring rhetoric of Obama, version 2008. The health-care package, though historic, was vastly watered down in a quixotic and ultimately failed quest to obtain bipartisan support. And for me, the biggest disappointment was his failure to push through the Fair Wages Act, which would have levelled the playing field for the US union movement, the long decline of which is the single biggest cause of the sharp decline of the middle class as vast wealth is concentrated in fewer and fewer hands.

Much of this can be explained away through the limited power of an American president to impose his legislative agen-

da on a fractious Congress, especially in a media landscape dominated by the likes of Rush Limbaugh and his coterie of conservative clowns.

But liberals and progressives should never underestimate the bullet the whole world dodged in this narrow victory. Mitt Romney would have completed the Bush administration's goal of subverting democracy at home and around the world for benefit of the folks who pay his bills. And in this election, which saw mind-boggling spending of some \$6 billion in campaign contributions, those are a very few, very dangerous folks.

Sure, the Obama Democrats raised billions, too. But mostly from millions of people donating \$50 or few hundred bucks. For the Republicans, a few super-rich people benefited from a virtually unregulated system in an unprecedented effort to buy the election for their fellow plutocrat, Romney, by giving him individual donations in the hundreds of millions in their quest to dominate the political agenda and protect their vast wealth from even timid attempts to restore economic and social justice.

In the end, what I find most heartening in the Obama victory is that a message of hope and inclusiveness triumphed over one based on hate and division, albeit by a worryingly thin margin.

Obama, the great communicator, wove this theme through his magnificent and stirring victory speech late in the night after the November 6 election. It's worth quoting at length for its reminder that worthwhile change is not imposed from on high, it pushed by the millions up to the top of the political agenda:

"The role of a citizen in our democracy does not end with your vote," Obama reminded the American people. "America's never been about what can be done for us; it's about what can be done by us, together, through the hard and frustrating but necessary work of self government...."

"IN THE END, WHAT I FIND MOST HEARTENING IN THE OBAMA VICTORY IS THAT A MESSAGE OF HOPE AND INCLUSIVENESS TRIUMPHED OVER ONE BASED ON HATE AND DIVISION."

"I've never been more hopeful about our future. And I ask you to sustain that hope. I'm not talking about blind optimism, the kind of hope that just ignores the enormity of the tasks ahead or the roadblocks that stand in our path. I'm not talking about the wishful idealism that just allows us to sit on the sidelines or shirk from a fight.

"I have always believed that hope is that stubborn thing that exists inside all of us, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that something better awaits us. So long as we have the courage to keep reaching, to keep working, to keep fighting...

"It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from or what you look like, or where you love. It doesn't matter whether you're black or white, or Hispanic or Asian or Native American, or young or old, or rich or poor, abled, disabled, gay or straight...

"We're not as divided as our politics suggest. We're not as cynical as the pundits believe. We are greater than the sum of our individual ambitions. And we remain more than a collection of red states and blue states. We are and forever will be, the UNITED States of America!"

Strong stuff, and words to work by.

Notice of appointment



Yves Barrette

Hydro-Québec is proud to announce that Yves Barrette has been appointed Manager – Community Relations and Special Projects within the Direction Régionale – La Grande Rivière and the Direction – Production.

Mr. Barrette has extensive experience in communications, which he acquired both at Hydro-Québec and SEBJ. He knows the Nord-du-Québec region and its native communities well, as he was in charge of communications for the Eastmain projects.

Mr. Barrette is returning to the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, where he lived and worked at the beginning of his career.



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Gambling Addiction help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

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Health and Sexuality Resources

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Gay Helpline: 1-888-505-1010
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The Native Women's Shelter of

Montreal: 1-866-403-4688
(www.nwsm.info)

Suicide Action Québec:

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Residential School Survivors: A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources

Concordia University, Montreal:

The Centre for Native Education has changed its name to the Aboriginal Student Resource Centre (ASRC). The new name is inclusive of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis students the centre serves and recognizes its role as a resource for the Concordia community. For any further details contact: aboriginalcentre@concordia.ca or 514-848-2424 ext. 7327.

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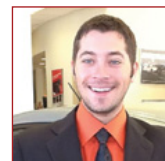


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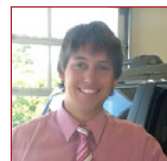
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November is Diabetes Prevention Month

In the past, Eenou Pimaatisiwin was taught by adults setting an example of being active – trapping trips, setting up camp and preparing meals together; and eating healthy – roasting, boiling and smoking meats and fish, sharing food so others could eat and be healthy, and eating traditional foods.

Today, Eenou Pimaatisiwin still depends on adults teaching and setting an example of healthy living – daily walks, hunting trips, skating as a family, cleaning the house or camp together, sharing chores in preparing meals, eating together as a family.

Eenou Pimaatisiwin - Let's set a good example for our children.



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